

An ASCD Study Guide for *Cultivating a Classroom of Calm: How to Promote Student Engagement and Self-Regulation*

This ASCD Study guide is designed to enhance and extend your understanding of the information contained in *Cultivating a Classroom of Calm: How to Promote Student Engagement and Self-Regulation*, an ASCD book written by Meredith McNerney and published in April 2024.

You can use the study guide before or after you have read the book, or as you finish each chapter. The study questions provided are not meant to cover all aspects of the book, but, rather, to address specific ideas that might warrant further reflection.

Most of the questions contained in this study guide are ones you can think about on your own, but you might consider pairing with a colleague or forming a study group with others who have read (or are reading) *Cultivating a Classroom of Calm*.

Chapter 1: What Is a Calmer Classroom?

1. When we talk about calmer classrooms, what do you envision?
2. There are many things that, as educators, are out of our control. In what ways will you be able to remain calm if you find yourself in what feels like an unfair, frustrating environment?
3. Is there a situation that you now perceive as a thorn? What will you do to start perceiving it as a bud?
4. How will you help a student feel both safety and belonging, knowing that their perception of this will help them regulate and restore calm?

Chapter 2: Keep Learners Engaged

1. Do you ever feel discouraged with your class? What factors contribute to a lack of participation?
2. How do you think your students would respond to the following?
 - Changing the look of the classroom
 - Changing or enforcing the current cell phone policy
 - Using timers
 - Habit stacking
3. Now that you know how important the first five minutes are, how do you envision the first five minutes of your class? How do you plan to hook your students?

Chapter 3: Understand Students Who Experience Trauma

1. In order to help traumatized students, you must have a trauma-sensitive classroom and you must first be calm. What methods will you use to practice inner calm? How will you effectively support students who have experienced trauma?
2. How could the red hearts program be a valuable tool for communication between teachers and staff at your school?

Chapter 4: Empathy with Accountability

1. You have learned that both empathy and accountability work together to help improve your relationship with your students. What empathetic steps will you take to ensure a calm classroom? What personal accountabilities will you insist upon from your students? What boundaries will you insist upon?
2. What steps will you take to avoid demonstrating adultism? Is there some behavior you currently display that you plan to change?
3. What are the stages of behavior escalation? What can an educator do to defuse a situation once a student has displayed negative behavior?

Chapter 5: Regulate with Mindfulness

1. What happens when the amygdala gets hijacked? What is the best way to self-regulate?
2. What are three ways to increase self-compassion? What additional benefits do self-compassionate people receive?
3. We have learned that certain types of stress can be good for us while other types of stress can be bad and affect our overall health. What five strategies should we use to help us cope with stress?

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